

Senior



STUDENT RESOURCE PACKET

2004 -
2005

Name: _____
Mentor: _____
Project EQ: _____

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Souhegan High School Mission

Souhegan High School aspires to be a community of learners born of respect, trust and courage. We consciously commit ourselves:

- *To support and engage an individual's unique gifts, passions and intentions*
- *To develop and empower the mind, body and heart*
- *To challenge and expand the comfortable limits of thought, tolerance and performance*
- *To inspire and honor the active stewardship of family, nation and globe*

What is Senior Project?

Senior Project is a demonstration of a personalized learning experience and is a requirement for graduation from Souhegan High School. Souhegan High School awards diplomas based on exhibited competencies. The intention of Senior Project is to allow you the opportunity to demonstrate your skills as an effective and resourceful learner.

The process of human development is a quest for independence. Growth means an ever-increasing ability to function effectively and resourcefully within your surroundings. Active participation in education results in higher quality learning. It develops ownership of learning. It provides opportunity to develop a set of skills to continue learning throughout life.

Souhegan High School Learner Expectations:

Knowledgeable Person

- a. Acquires and integrates the critical information necessary for success in academic and nonacademic disciplines.
- b. Effectively utilizes the skills and strategies necessary for success in academic and nonacademic disciplines.

Complex Thinker

- a. Effectively translates issues and situations into manageable tasks that have a clear purpose.
- b. Effectively utilizes a variety of complex reasoning strategies.

Skilled Information Processor/Consumer

- a. Effectively interprets and synthesizes information.
- b. Effectively uses a variety of information gathering techniques and information resources.
- c. Accurately assesses the value of information.
- d. Recognizes where and how projects would benefit from additional information.

Effective Communicator/Producer

- a. Expresses ideas clearly.
- b. Effectively communicates with diverse audiences.
- c. Effectively communicates through a variety of mediums.
- d. Effectively communicates for a variety of purposes.
- e. Creates quality products.

Self-directed Learner

- a. Seeks different perspectives and considers choices before acting.
- b. Pushes the limits of his/her abilities and perseveres when faced with difficult situations.
- c. Establishes clear goals and manages progress toward achieving them.
- d. Generates and pursues personal standards of performance.

Collaborative Worker

- a. Works toward the achievement of group goals.
- b. Demonstrates effective interpersonal skills.
- c. Contributes to group maintenance.
- d. Self-assesses and monitors own personal behavior within a group.

Responsible Citizen

- a. Shows willingness to work toward improvement of the community.

Timeline 2004 - 2005

What?	When?	Who?
Senior Project Kickoff	November 3rd	Regina S & Chris B
Proposal Writing Mentor/mentee weekly meetings begin Project Journals begin (weekly entries)	November 3rd	Seminar Teachers Mentors with Mentee(s)
Draft Proposal Written, Proofread, and Reviewed with Mentor. Assessments #1 and 2 complete.	November 15th	Mentors with Mentee(s)
Late Start Panel # 1: Proposal Presentation Bring to Panel: Assessment #1, 2 and four copies of final proposal.	November 16th	Mentors with Mentee(s) Panel Feedback form to Mentor, Senior, File
Project Checkpoint: Seniors should have Assessments #3, #4, #5, #6 6-7 entries in Project Journals	Week of December 13th	Mentors with Mentee(s) Copies to Regina
Project Checkpoint: Seniors should have Assessment #7 10-12 Journal entries	Week of January 17th	Mentors with Mentee(s) Copy to Regina
Late Start Panel # 2: Progress Bring to Panel four copies of Applied Research Plan	February 8th	Mentors with Mentee(s) Mentor, Senior, File
Project Approved for Presentation	Week of March 21st	Mentor- BLUE sheet to Regina
Presentations Practiced, Revised, Polished Assessment #8 and #9	March 21st - April 8th	Advisory, Mentor, and others. Copy to Regina
April 8th - 15th: SENIOR PROJECT PRESENTATIONS Draft of Evidence of Learning Paper due at presentation (3 copies)		
FINAL Evidence of Learning Paper Assessment #10	2 days after presentation.	Copy to Regina
Exhibition Night	April 20th	Senior Class, families, SHS Community.

Senior Project Expectations and roles

Expectations To Have of Yourself:

- Have a positive attitude. If you need help or support, ask for it in a productive way. Be inspired by your work and find ways to keep it engaging.
- Work closely with your mentor and outside expert, but keep in mind that this is YOUR Senior Project. Retain ownership and responsibility. Do not expect others to push you to do the work. Push yourself.
- Go for quality and let that quality be reflected throughout your work. Express yourself clearly, think things through fully, pay attention to details. We strongly encourage you to word process your correspondence, project journal and Evidence of Learning paper. Hold yourself to high standards.
- Express appreciation to those who help you be successful.

Role of Your Mentor

Your mentor is an integral part of your Senior Project experience. Treat your mentor well. Be certain that you attend scheduled meetings, come equipped with accomplishments and needs, and be ready to share your excitement. Your mentor may or may not be an expert in the field you are researching, but will coach you as you do the following:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Write a <i>Proposal</i> and <i>Essential Question</i> | • Self-assess progress |
| • Develop a <i>Research Strategy</i> | • Design a <i>Research Application</i> |
| • Locate resources | • Design a <i>Presentation</i> |
| • Set and keep weekly goals | • Write an <i>Evidence of Learning Paper</i> |

You will meet with your mentor **weekly**. Your mentor will review your project journal and assist you in finding direction to accomplish the tasks above.

Role of Your Outside Expert

Your outside expert is part of your research strategy. Having a person available who is an expert in the field directly relating to your project, who can answer questions, and who can provide resources will help make your project meaningful to you.

Finding an Outside Expert:

- Word of Mouth- Ask friends, family, faculty. Usually you can find a lead this way. Your mentor can mass e-mail the entire faculty if you ask really nicely.
- Look in the Yellow Pages. Find a field that relates to your topic and look up companies. Call. Make an appointment to meet with someone or get an email address or both!

Using your Outside Expert well:

A successful relationship with the outside expert involves:

- *honesty*. Your outside expert needs to clearly tell you what is/is not possible, where information is, who/what other resources might be helpful, etc.
- *regularly scheduled meetings or contact*. You cannot get information or expertise from your outside expert if you do not meet or converse on a regular basis. Schedule multiple meetings for specific purposes in advance.
- *going to meetings prepared*. The meeting is for you. It is your responsibility to be certain you are not wasting your outside expert's time (as well as your own). Bring necessary materials, questions, etc.

See appendices for an information sheet to share with your Outside Expert

Role of Your Advisor and Advisory:

Your Advisor also plays several roles in Senior Project. Advisors *are a resource for:*

- Helping you choose a topic
- Finding/suggesting resources
- Sharing, considering, and “tweaking” EQs in advisory
- Sharing progress on research in advisory
- Comparing ideas for Applied Research
- Planning and practicing presentations
- Facilitating communications with your mentor and outside expert

Ask your advisor to arrange a regular “Senior Project Day” in advisory where each member can talk about progress, needs, and give feedback to each other.

Your Senior Project... start to finish

I: Questioning

Questioning begins with selecting a topic to research for your project. It is critical that you pick a topic that is of *real interest* to you; there is no greater drudgery than working on a boring or “easy” topic month after month! After selecting a topic, begin crafting an Essential Question to focus your project, and to introduce your Senior Project Proposal. Your Project Proposal is a vitally important document. It allows you to clarify your thinking and present to your panel what you are interested in learning, how you plan to go about the learning, and what you hope your outcome will be. You create your proposal by working **closely** with your mentor.

A proposal contains:

1. An *Essential Question* that focuses and highlights what you want to do.
 - Topical or “sub-questions” will help to focus the EQ onto more specific aspects of your project
2. A *Research Strategy*
 - Cite books, experiments, surveys, magazine articles, places to visit, interviews, etc. you plan to use. Be sure to include materials from print, personal experience, and electronic resources. Establish that a base of research exists for your topic.
 - What will be challenging in your research?
3. Who your *Mentor* and *Outside Expert* are for your project.
 - What is your mentor’s name and your rationale for choice?
 - What is your outside expert’s name, credentials, rationale for choice, and contact information?
4. Preliminary thoughts on your *Application of Research*. What might your project’s synthesis or “product” be?

Proposals are word processed with final drafts submitted to mentors for pre-approval, then presented to special panels who will engage you in thoughtful discussion about your proposed work. Panel members will give you specific, written feedback on your project proposal and approve/disapprove it. If not approved, you will be given written guidance. If you pick a passion to learn about, and plan with enthusiasm, your project should be a pleasure for the panel to hear about.

Crafting Your Essential Question

A good question provides meaningful direction and lets you design clear objectives. Essential Questions lead to deeper thinking by being “probing” and *requiring* significant thinking and research to answer.

Good Essential Questions are those that have the following characteristics: They...

- have no one, obvious answer and require more than a yes or no answer.

Questioning • Researching • Applying • Presenting • Reflecting

- generate a list of relevant “sub questions,” or topical questions, that focus on a specific aspect of the Essential Question.
- arise from natural inquiry; they are translated from a “wonder” statement to a question.
- avoid the use of personal pronouns, such as *I*, *we*, *you*.
- have more of an answer than a compiled list.

Example of an Essential Question with Topical or “sub” Questions:

How is music therapy used to treat stress?

- What is music therapy?
- What are the stress factors of a specific, target audience?
- How is a music therapy plan created and implemented?

See Appendices for an example of a successful Senior Project proposal.

II: Research

research *n.* 1. Scholarly or scientific investigation or inquiry. 2. Close, careful study. *v.* 1. To study something thoroughly so as to present in a detailed, accurate manner.

American Heritage College Dictionary, Third Edition

Research *must include* the following components:

1. Printed resources: books, technical literature, literature, articles from reputable and relevant sources.
2. Personal Experience: interviews, internships, apprenticeships, site visits and for observations.
3. Electronic Research: Current information from reputable and relevant web sites or other electronic resources (for example, EBSCO).

Documentation of Research/Progress

- ***Self and Mentor Assessment.*** About once a month you will assess your progress with your mentor. You will assess in the following areas:
 1. Crafting your Essential Question
 2. Research Strategy
 3. Quality of Resources
 4. Documenting Your Research
 5. Relationship with Your Mentor and Outside Expert
 6. Communicating Your Research Progress
 7. Breadth and Depth of Research
 8. Applying Research
 9. Practicing Your Presentation
 10. Evidence of Learning Paper

See the Appendices for a copy of the Assessments.

- **A Project Journal** must be completed that communicates an overview of weekly progress toward answering your Essential Question. Please word process your journals. The project journal allows you to think and reflect on what you are doing, where you have been and organize a strategy for what is next. It provides physical evidence of your learning. Journals are written with you as the primary audience. Here are some prompts to consider:
 - What did you do this week? Where did you visit? Who did you interview?
 - What was the most important thing you learned?
 - Did you accomplish goals you set from last week? Did they change?
 - What is giving you trouble? Where can you get help?
 - What are your goals for next week?
- **A System of Documentation** that creates and keeps track of the physical evidence of your research in progress. You should keep things like:

notes	audiotape	copies of articles
videotape of work or interviews	photos	music

These assist you in effectively communicating your work. You must create and maintain this evidence in an organized format of your choice. Bibliography entries must be kept in MLA format.

III: Applying Research

Applying research results in the creation of something original. In many ways Applied Research is simply the part of the project that “closes the loop.” You’ve demonstrated that you can form a question, and can effectively design and implement research. So now what?

The application of research is an exercise in *synthesis*; the assembling of critical elements of what you’ve learned in a new combination, product or other form. Your applied research should:

- reflect evidence of your research learning
- be an extension of your learning in a new way
- communicates your learning to a public audience in a comprehensive manner.

Ask yourself this question: ***Could you have done your applied research without having done your research?*** If the answer is yes, it is ***not*** a synthesis of your learning and you need to rethink or refine it!

Examples: If you...

- researched the styles of several famous poets, you might write a new poem reflecting those styles as applied research.
- researched different kayak designs for a variety of uses, you might create an original design for a specific use.
- researched principles and techniques of forensic science, you might write a story in which a crime was investigated using those techniques.

IV: Presenting Your Project

Presenting your work closes another loop. You have completed an in-depth study and created an application of your research. The formal presentation communicates your work to a broader audience.

A presentation generally has the following components:

Introduction

- Opener
- Introduce yourself, project
- Motivation for choosing this project
- Essential Question
- Objective for the presentation
- Preview... what are you going to share with them?

Body

- Organized Supporting Material with transitions

Closing

- Summary
- What did you get out of your Senior Project? Describe your personal growth.
- “To do” (if appropriate), areas for further research, or thought provoking question with which to leave the audience.

To enhance the body of your presentation, consider creative use of supporting materials such as the following:

- Visual Aids (graphs, charts, posters)
- Readings
- Demonstrations
- References to your research
- References to places
- References to people
- Video Clips

Successful Presentations:

- are a minimum of 20 minutes in length and no longer than 25 minutes
- answer the Essential Question through evidence of research
- are clearly organized
- have effective supporting materials
- describe the learning process

Questioning • Researching • Applying • Presenting • Reflecting

- clearly share applied research
- can successfully address audience questions

Practice, practice, practice your presentation with your friends and family, with your mentor, and in advisory.

V: Reflecting on Your Learning:

You have completed your question, research, application and now your presentation is a memory. Your last major task to bring successful closure to Senior Project is to reflect on your work.

The reflection is made up of three parts: Reflecting on the Senior Project process as it affected you, and providing evidence of your mastery of Souhegan's Learner Expectations, and relating your work to the Souhegan HS Mission:

1. The Senior Project process is made up of five components: Questioning, Researching, Applying Research, Presenting, and Reflecting.

- *What parts of, or activities in the process, were challenging to you?*
- *What worked well for you? What did you find you were most successful at?*
- *How will the work you accomplished benefit you or others in the future? Does it relate to life outside of or after Souhegan? How?*

2. Using specific examples that are relevant to your project, demonstrate evidence of your learning in Souhegan High School's Learner Expectations?

3. How does your work connect to or reflect the mission of Souhegan High School?

Using examples of how expectations were utilized/applied during the project is crucial to a good paper. It is **not** enough to state: "I struggled with the self-directed learner expectation." You must give examples from your work to illustrate your Evidence of Learning.

The expectation is that you will follow a reasonably standard writing format which includes:

- introducing yourself and your topic/project
- stating your Essential Question
- addressing, the prompts above
- providing a conclusion

Consider your audience when you write. Your mentor will certainly read it. It may be shared publicly at Exhibition Night, and excerpts may be read at faculty meetings. Your paper must be word processed.

You may begin this paper after completing your applied research, before your presentation. A draft of the paper is given to your panel at your presentation for feedback. The final paper is due two days after successfully completing your presentation.

VI: Related Information

Senior Project Honors Criteria

To attain Honors for Senior Project your:

- mentor must nominate you, and
- assessments must be complete and meet the EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS level, and
- presentation must be qualified for honors by the panel you present to.

Exhibition Night

The Senior Project Exhibition Night is a celebration of your hard work and accomplishments. This event is dedicated to revisiting some excellent presentations, and displaying work for public recognition. A significant portion of the evening is spent presenting the following awards:

The Helen Fitzgerald Award for Public Speaking	Passion for Inquiry
Excellence in Applied Research	Personal Growth
Outstanding Community Service	Excellence in Research
Excellence in Creativity	Excellence in Presentation

Senior Project Honors are also awarded at this event. Come and enjoy the excitement!

That's it! Now it's up to you to do it! Best of luck!

*Chris Balch and Regina Sullivan
Senior Project Coordinators
The Souhegan High School Faculty and Staff.*